

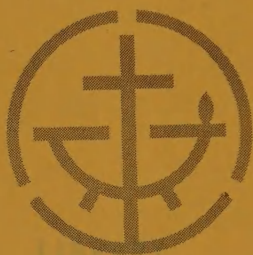
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"Help Those Women"

*A Manual for
Women Church Workers*

BY

Alfred
FREDERICK A. AGAR 1872-

*Author of "Dead or Alive," "Church Finance,"
"Personality and Possessions," etc.*



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Religion 259

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TO
MY WIFE

Harriett Caldwell Agar
FELLOW WORKER, INSPIRER
AND
BEST FRIEND

Religion

FOREWORD

THIS representation of women's work in the local church follows the logical order. First, an examination of present conditions, then an attempt at diagnosis and finally the presentation of a plan and methods of work that will be most conducive to future health and growth.

It would be just as acceptable for a physician to give a remedy or perform some operation without an examination or a diagnosis of the patient as for me to change the above order.

My hope is that the first part of the book will be read in spite of what might seem to some as its critical aspect, and then the remainder of the presentation will be so thoroughly constructive that the real purpose will be fulfilled and the reader will be glad that the logical order was followed. It will then help to make her own women's organization free from all harmful practices and full of good Christ-like works. For existing conditions in women's organizations in the local churches the men must bear a large share of the blame. Men have been the controlling factors in the church life

of the past. They must now be ready and willing to yield up some prerogatives in order that the church may be modernized and made efficient.

"She hath done what she could," can be truthfully said of multitudes of women church workers. In the presence of tremendous local and world needs there has been a desperate lack of funds and workers. Many things have been undertaken in order to secure the needed resources. Wrong methods have been used, not because they were easy or enjoyed but in sheer desperation. Later on familiarity with the wrong method made it to be accepted as right without question.

But a new day has dawned. Men and women are hearing of systematic and proportionate giving to God from the standpoint of stewardship. Christ-like service and new methods are becoming more general. This manual is a loving effort to help along the day of better things so that His church may be ready to receive Him when He comes again as King of Kings.

FREDERICK A. AGAR.

New York City.

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I

ORGANIZED WOMEN'S WORK

FOR devotion, persistence, intelligence and general efficiency the women's organizations of the average local church are in advance of every other department. To account for this fact we need to study the conditions under which their development has been made.

Besides participating in the general work of the church as personal workers in the Church or Bible School, the young people's and junior societies, the choir and the evangelistic efforts of the organization, the women of the local church have quite generally maintained an Aid Society, and one or more mission societies or circles in the interests of home and foreign missions.

The Aid Society or Women's Auxiliary has long been a decided factor in the life of the Protestant church. It grew to power through the apparent needs of the parent organization, which needs were unmet by the church as a whole. When the money resources of the

church were small the women organized themselves to keep in order and in repair the simple furnishings of the ancient house of God. They further banded themselves together in prayer circles. They next met certain social needs of the main organization to which they belonged. Finally in many a local church the women became one of the decided factors in the support of the organization through their ability to earn money in various ways.

All of these efforts were successful in attaining the objective which was sought until this Women's Society became one of the dominant factors in the local life of the church. In later years, it is sad to say, that in most cases, the Aid Society became less and less a factor in the spiritual life of the church and in personal evangelism.

The local church used the Aid Society as a life saver in money difficulties in very many instances. Not long ago an English religious weekly carried this advertisement, "Wanted, a horse to do the work of a Methodist minister." In many cases the church had an Aid Society to do the main work of the organization.

During the above development of the Aid Society or Women's Auxiliary and about three generations ago a smaller group of the same or other women in the church saw the need

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beyond the bounds of their own local parishes for distinctive work by women amongst women and children. Their love for Christ, their ready sympathies, their maternal natures and their own sex freedom made them enlist in a fine effort to alleviate the condition of their less fortunate sisters and their offspring all over the world. Mission Circles or Women's Missionary Societies were organized in some local churches for the purpose of spreading missionary information and raising "an overall" offering with which to send the gospel to women and children in non-Christian lands as well as to those in our own country. The home mission phase of work was helped mostly by money. Very little active personal participation in the work for the unchurched or foreign-speaking people in our midst has been done through the organized women's home mission circles in the local church. The money has provided equipment, it has paid professional workers and has furnished training schools for young women who desired to take up missionary work as a calling.

The foreign mission phase of work was helped in a similar way because the fields of opportunity were beyond the reach of personal effort on the part of the women in the home circle.

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The interest and intelligence of the women were being constantly stimulated by growing needs and the success of their efforts, until in the present day the backbone and projecting power of much of the missionary education work must be attributed to the women. The remainder of the church followed far behind the women's missionary organization in zeal, in money raising, and in study. Much of the missionary interest in the local church up to ten years ago was the direct result of the efforts of the women. Thus the women's work produced a most valuable by-product in many a church.

It is only fair to say that the growth of the women's missionary organization was often made in the face of determined opposition from the church organization as a whole, due somewhat to the fear that the women had no right to push a distinctive need in the face of more general local needs which belonged to the church itself. But the church could not long escape the fact that the women's missionary circles were growing apace in spite of opposition, and were showing mighty powers and resources. Thus every other missionary enterprise was gradually lifted and pushed along.

In this brief and very general way I have tried to give just a bird's-eye view of the

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past as it concerns the organized activities of the women in the local church. These activities of church women were among the first signs of enlarged usefulness and freedom of expression that have since come to women throughout the land. The church is a good field for pioneering.

This pioneer work, done under adverse conditions, added to the general efficiency of women in church work has brought the women's organizations to their present place of power in the life of the church.

The main objective of this book, however, must concern the present and the future, not the past.

Let us examine carefully and fairly the present status of women's organized work in the local church.

It will be found in most cases that the Aid Society and Mission Societies or Circles are not properly coordinated and correlated with the rest of the church life. The local church is today in great danger of multiplying subsidiary organizations without properly relating them to the parent body. In time these subsidiaries come to possess an individuality and activity which becomes a divisive element in the life of the local church. Every part must be correlated with the whole so that perfect

cooperation can be secured. While believing strongly in them some way must be found properly to unify the women's activities so that the divisive element may be eliminated. It must not be thought that the women's organizations alone are singled out in the above statement. The whole local church has been divided into so many segments that it has largely lost the value of its united strength. The whole is greater than its part and neither the Bible School, the Men's Brotherhood nor any other part should do aught but what will strengthen the power of the whole. These various parts of the whole must so be related that the unity, purpose and power of all shall be enlarged while the part has full opportunity to do all that is possible. Sometimes the church has been at fault by refusing proper recognition to a vital part of the whole, sometimes the women's organizations have in the face of unfair treatment grown resentful and then gone along the path of their own choosing and thereby have lost sight of the interests of the whole.

Not long ago a church voted that no more money-making devices should be held under the auspices of the organizations nor should the edifice be used for such purposes. In spite of this vote the Aid Society continued to earn

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money and the president in response to a remonstrance said, "We will do what we think best. In the past the church has been only too glad to load their troubles on us." An exceptional case! Yes, but there are many other cases where the same spirit is shown in a less militant way. Other segments of the church have acted in a similar manner.

The divisive element connected with any part of the local church must give way to a unified plan which will improve the output of the whole while it gives ample opportunity to every part of the whole for the exercise of every inherent power.

After quite a thorough examination in some thousands of churches of all communions it is quite safe and true to say that less than one-third of the women in the membership of the local church are connected in any active way with the organized women's activities. There must be some underlying cause for such a fact.

Let us in love with clear vision and patience seek to find some of the reasons why so many women church members are not at work in their organized departments. Some women should not be expected to participate. Family ties of great magnitude or other related forms of work occupy their time and energy. But this is not

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true of the great majority of the unenlisted ones. What, then, are some of the causes for non-participation on their part?

Many a woman professes not to be interested in the missionary phase of the Kingdom work. She sees in that organization only another effort to secure her money. The constant appeals, the dues, the teas and all such methods speak only of a desire for her money and do not display to her any interest in her personally. Such a woman is not altogether to be blamed. She is to be pitied because of the large element of truth in her viewpoint. The National Women's organizations are not so much at fault as are some of the local women with more zeal and pride to secure an apportionment than they have understanding and love for the principles that must be behind all the money produced for a great Kingdom purpose. Many a professing Christian man or woman does not know that God requires of all His children at least the first fruits of all their increase as a token of their love and obedience. The local women's missionary organizations as well as the Aid Societies have been getting too much money at the expense of life and not enough money as a result of life. We may rebel against the methods used to secure money from us but in the heart of

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every true child of God there must be no rebellion against the act of giving, but a loving participation in that form of worship. But do not forget that the women have not been sinning alone in that respect. Niggardly, non-stewarding (non-participating), purse-holding men have to bear their large share of the blame.

Many women have had a taste of Aid Society life and found that it lacks spiritual vitality and Christian service so have left the organization and gone into philanthropic or social organizations outside the church circle where the purpose was plain and their responsibilities or obligations were equally plain. I have been asking in churches of all communions what was the purpose of the Women's Auxiliary or Aid Society. Not in ten per cent of the cases have they stated a spiritual objective of paramount importance such as intercession or personal evangelism. The same statement could be made concerning the missionary circles with some measure of truth. The average viewpoint is that the women's organized activities are to produce money, then to furnish social activities, study opportunities and some other lesser factors. Sadly it must be confessed that this viewpoint of the most active and efficient part of the church only reflects the attitude of the whole church organiza-

tion. Church members have done but very little personal evangelism in past days.

Proper educational processes for missionary ends have touched only a small part of the church membership.

Literally in hundreds upon hundreds of gatherings of women all over America the writer has asked if they liked and were agreed upon the wisdom of present conditions touching the organized women's work. With very few exceptions I have yet to get any real affirmative response from those present. "What are we going to do in the face of present needs?" they ask in response. The answer is forthcoming, but better than a mere verbal answer is the knowledge that a unified budget, a double envelope and a thorough every-member visitation with proper follow-up is producing the right conditions in many hundreds of churches of all communions. Thus present conditions are being materially altered and the women set free from the thralldom of money seeking to meet church and missionary needs.

The every-member canvass or visitation is not a grab for money, it is a ministry to life which results in the life producing proper spiritual manifestations in the sight of God. In other words, intelligent, genuine love to God will always produce in every life the needed

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function of giving and the individual will put on God's altar for all His great world and local purposes the maximum which the life is capable of paying. This will be done as a direct act of worship and not in response to a commercial appeal to buy or to eat. Then the church will have money enough to meet every call of God. Fundamentally this result must be secured before any advance movement will progress far towards the desired end.

Many godly women, however, find here a place of real difficulty and one which deeply hurts the soul. They have husbands who are good and kind in many ways, but they are not professing Christians. They consider themselves the wage earners and will not give their wives money to spend in church circles. Some educational work needs to be done with such men to teach them that they are no more the wage earners of the family than are the women. If both are filling their proper place, by her constant and loving care of him and the home the wife is quite largely responsible for the man's capacity to earn, besides which she is somewhat responsible for his ability and ambition to do his best in his daily work. Furthermore the care of the home and the children is arduous work when properly done. She is therefore entitled to her fair share of recogni-

tion in the distribution of the money which is produced by their joint efforts. Women often say that a woman usually gets what she really goes after and that the man who objects to his wife paying money to the church has practically never been known to object to her paying dues to some lodge. May it be because he has not understood the church? At any rate I have known of several churches where an every-member canvass developed a few women whose husbands took the above attitude. In some cases after consultation with the wife, a team of men went to the husband and in man fashion explained the case. The results were highly satisfactory to all concerned. No matter what might be the results of such efforts to produce the desired end with the consent of an unbelieving husband it can always be possible for the Christian wife to pay to God the first fruits of all the *money which comes into her hands to do with as she pleases*. Under such conditions she is a good steward if but ten cents a year should be produced from the only dollar that was her own. Neither God nor the church could demand more from the standpoint of duty. Love might, however, lead her to give more of that dollar.

With the money difficulty out of the way and the needs of the church and Kingdom being

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met by normal processes the women would be set free for their real work of spiritual ministry. More and more I am coming to believe that only the church as the divinely planned organization should concern itself with the production of money from the stewards gathered within that household. *That no subsidiary part of the church should raise money for any purpose within the church.*

The relation of the pastor to the work of the women's organizations is highly important. In many a case the pastor has no relation whatsoever of a personal nature to the organized women's work in his parish. However, he usually has some in his wife's name. But that should not be sufficient. The pastor is quite often blameworthy for the conditions that result when he does not have the proper oversight of and participation in the work done by the women. In some cases I meet with the feeling and statement that, "we do not want any man coming around to interfere with our activities." When such an attitude towards the office of pastor is found things are done and an atmosphere is created which does not make for a unity of purpose and enterprise in the whole church. The pastor is the undershepherd and general manager of the whole church. The women's work is part of that whole, there-

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fore the minister is responsible for all that is planned and done in that part. It is true that many a young minister knows naught of women's work in the church because the seminary course has no clinical help to give students along that line, but the women must insist that a pastor's preparation shall include such a course given under competent teachers. The pastor need not be "a boss," to lord it over his heritage but he must be consulted by and must counsel with the women and help as well as oversee all that is being done from time to time.

In this complex world some of the most vital and dynamic spiritual forces in the church are to be found in the lives of Christian women. But for some reasons which have been briefly discussed in what has already been said, that spiritual dynamic in the lives of women has not found any extended expression through the organized women's work in the larger life of the local church. We have had far more Marthas cumbered with much care about money for the Aid or Circle than we have had Marys who learned the great truths of spiritual outreach at the feet of the Master. In common with all the rest of the church the women have been serving tables, cleaning up the house, raising money and providing social life while

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the unsaved were left to die in sin, the foreigner in our midst was untouched and women and children from alien lands continued to be alien in the midst of a so-called Christian nation that gave them no brotherhood in Christ nor any sisterhood. Some of the work now done should be continued. "This ought ye to have done and not to have left the other undone." It takes about eleven church members to lead a soul to Christ and those eleven take a whole year for their task. The other day I heard of a twelve-year-old child in Portland, Maine, who somehow got the idea that it was part of her task to bring people to Christ and in several months she produced twelve professions, many of them from adults. Of late things have begun to change. Many of the women's missionary circles have incorporated a quest for life into their great purposes. More and more they will seek life first, then having won the life they will endeavor to produce every proper manifestation in that life. Amongst the converts of the foreign mission work a very large number feel an obligation and desire to seek the salvation of their fellow-men. A Crow Indian, during five years of travel along the Jesus road, has led more than a dozen to seek Christ. Many others have shown similar activity.

Without such a quest for life itself all else in the long run only injures, because it is inverting God's order and therefore destroys life in the later stages. It is a sad fact that each year by exclusion, erasure and such means we lose about half as many members as are added to the church by profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Such a result is a clear indication that the church is not practicing a proper method of child nurture.

Women outside the church are doing wonderful things to help the world along economic, social and political lines. Some women in the divine organization called the church are towers of strength and are doing heroic work. We need more like these few. Not long ago in a certain large city on a specified day wherever two streets came together, at some time during that day some women gathered there and in various ways attracted the attention of passers-by and then one of them spoke to the gathering in behalf of a certain cause in which they were interested. That was a splendid piece of organization and effort in behalf of a secondary cause, but our Christian women have yet to attempt such a similar piece of work in behalf of the greatest cause known to the world, the cause of Christ, the world's only hope and Saviour. First things first is

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God's request and He must be first in the individual life as well as in the organized women's work. In the long ago it was a woman who made the prophet of God "a little cake first of all," and then found her slender store was enough for a most stressful season.

Women have a genius for the propagation of great causes, they make excellent campaigners and they secure results. The church needs all these capabilities of women, not alone in the women's departments but in the larger reaches of the work which belongs to the whole church.

The present tendency towards unification is not an attempt to limit the opportunities of women church workers or their organizations, but it is an effort to project the most capable and energetic part of the whole church into the larger circles of activity to be found beyond their own segment. Those segments should, of course, be left intact with the definite goals which belong to them, but the hope is to use them beyond that to vitalize and energize all the other segments of the church. It is not to limit but to enlarge the sphere of their activities that the plans and methods presented here are aimed. *The women's organizations in the local church must never be destroyed. They*

must be developed, projected and properly related to all other sections.

The women and their organizations must be given fair treatment. Taxation without representation is unfair, so is enlarged responsibility and heavier work without an added place in all the councils and official life of the church. If the men want all the offices they should do all the work. If others are to help in the work the official responsibilities should also be shared by them. In only three cases out of a great, great many does the Word of God make sex distinction. We should not make them in spiritual work. There are some tasks for which men are best fitted, others can best be filled by women. In the selection of church workers fitness must govern with only due regard to sex.

As a final word in this opening chapter let it be pointed out that missionary endeavor and giving has been made a thing separate and distinct from the rest of the spiritual life and experience. The separateness must be forever removed. The whole missionary activity and the duty of stewardship must be given its vital place in the spiritual life, and will concern therefore all the phases of that life.

If an Aid Society is really an aid to the church of Christ then it will be aiding the

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church to preach Christ to lost souls. To preach Christ to lost souls is missionary work.

The one purpose of the church is to make disciples in God's name and then by teaching and training to make those disciples the best possible examples of divine grace, so that the world passing them by will see in them the Master Christ and because of what they see in those lives they will be more anxious and ready to receive Him.

When a physician has examined a patient and has discovered an ailment, he is not called to account for criticism when the patient is told in a plain and proper way what is wrong with him. Rather does the patient admit the truth of the statement made to him and then with due diligence and concentration seek the path to health. The great question is, "Has the truth been spoken?"

The whole church of Christ needs to "help those women" that they in turn may help the whole organization secure for our Saviour all that He desires for the world.

II

THE MISSION SOCIETY OR CIRCLE

AS a force in the local church the mission society or circle, home or foreign, is a growing power. The chief indication of that growth is to be seen in the increasing scope and value of its educational program. It is also shown by the growing value of the mission circles as direct evangelizing agencies.

Again it is seen in the increasing size of the budgets containing the money goals for the two specific phases of women's missions when compared with the budget of the local church for those same two general mission enterprises.

When first organized it was the purpose of the members to secure a sacrificial offering from the women of the church but long ago the women of the mission circles forsook the idea that they were to gather just an "over-all" or sacrificial offering. They took the position, and rightly so, that their work was to be part of the whole Kingdom task and therefore must be supported by the professing Christian

women in proportion as they support any other phase of the plan of world salvation. Their efforts were therefore turned quite largely into channels to produce from the women and children the money needed for their activities. In addition they projected certain other forms of indirect money-raising that were of doubtful value, even if they resulted in producing some money at that immediate time. For instance, the system of charging dues to belong to the organization. On the one hand this limited the number of women who participated in the work of the circle. It put a money value on what should have been a necessity of spiritual life. Surely that is not an overstatement. The missionary enterprise is dearest in the heart of God and it is essential to every loving understanding of His Fatherhood that we please Him by participation in it. Again, dues which are always put at a low figure had the inevitable result of limiting the giving of many who should have paid in to the cause much larger amounts.

A notable demonstration of this principle was discovered by a large communion which adopted a slogan of "A dollar per capita from every member each year for missions." After several years they reached that standard but it took time and heroic work to get beyond it.

The slogan had fixed a low standard upon a great constituency.

Dues furthermore furnish some with the excuse of stating to the church when asked to give to the mission budget of the whole body that they were already paying to missions through the women's circle. Thus in effect the part was greater than the whole. Some time ago a prominent officer in the women's missionary work asked the following question: "If I have but a dollar to give to all phases of God's work, am I not quite right in giving all that money to women's work?" When she was emphatically told, "No, the dollar should represent the life in the 'beginning at Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth,' " plan of Christ she was greatly incensed and proclaimed the speaker as an enemy of women's work. Fundamentally, dues to belong to any part of the Kingdom work are wrong in principle. Every woman member of the church, by virtue of that relation, should be considered as related to any and every part of the church work that concerned her.

The payment of the money obligation should be to God on behalf of all the work to be done by and through the church. The plan of Christ's church should make ample provision *for each and every phase of the world enter-*

prise. Thus the church would include in an ample way, in a unified missionary and beneficence budget the work done by women for the unreached women and children all over the world. While every member of the church recognized that women were best fitted along certain lines to approach and reach women and children yet the duty of furnishing support for such work rested upon the whole membership of the organization.

If women's work with women and children in the name of Christ is part of God's great plan for saving a lost world it is as much the duty of men to furnish money for it as it is for women to do so. No one feeds his foot or seeks to nourish just one part of the body. The whole body, fitly joined together, is properly nourished and then every part in its proper way is fitly nourished. The church is called the body of Christ. So the paying must be to God for the whole work of the church and Kingdom, and then in ample proportion the part called the women's missionary enterprise will have its full share of what has come in from the whole membership. It is as much the duty and privilege of a man or boy to furnish money for women's work as it is for the women to pay towards all the rest of God's Kingdom enterprises, which includes

the local church. "He that careth not for his own is worse than an infidel." After a good steward has met the primary obligation, then God offers ample opportunity for giving of a sacrificial nature in whatever direction the sympathy of the person leads him to find great and specific needs. Sacrificial giving needs to be encouraged and greatly enlarged in its scope.

If dues to belong to the mission circle are wrong, then any device which offers something in the way of material or pleasure in return for money paid out for God's cause is a much more serious wrong. Inevitably it leads people to furnish and have supplied by indirection what must under God's plan be made a direct result of our relation to Him. Giving is essential to spiritual life. Buying is not giving. Paying for tea is not giving to God. When examined closely and seen clearly much of our money-raising procedure looks quite like what the modern world calls graft. No subterfuge should be allowed to becloud this issue. God has no pleasure in money drawn out of people by any such methods. He wants the life that loves to give Him as an act of worship the first part of all that is increase in that life. If every member of the church reached at least this minimum expectation then the Kingdom of God would have ample resources for every

phase of the world task. However, such a minimum standard should not suffice for many who have been prospered of God in this world's goods.

As now carried on the mission circles are largely agencies for money-raising in the life of the church. The average church is troubled on every hand by the widespread begging habits and devices in the constant effort to secure funds till the very souls of people are vexed. If we do not end such methods then such methods will end the power of the church. The mission circles have other functions than money-raising, the value of which is readily recognized but most of the other activities have been made a means to the money-raising end. The whole process must be turned around. The devotional and study life of the circles as well as the active doing of missionary work amongst the unsaved within reach of the local church must grow out of love to God and grow into a stewardship that will give God the first fruits of all the increase of time, talent and money.

Some will say that this is pure idealism and impracticable in a modern church. It is idealism, all that comes to us from the ideal Christ partakes of His character. But it is eminently practical as attested by many churches that have put it into their daily prac-

tice and have continued it year after year with growing satisfaction.

As a part of the whole the mission circle must give proper consideration to the plans of the whole church. On the other hand, the church must needs be eminently fair and Christ-like in all its dealings with any of its parts. A physical body by its very nature cares for all its parts. If you injure a finger the whole hand and the whole body seeks to protect the injured part. If one function of the body is impaired all the others seek to bear part of the load and help restore the abnormal conditions to normality. The church must act likewise. There must be helpful cooperation and a sympathetic coordination of all activities. Yet many a mission circle has had grave reason to believe otherwise. A large church induced a very active and successful mission circle to join in unifying their budgets with those of the whole church for home and foreign missions. For several years they had raised and paid over to the women's national society for foreign missions \$1400.00 and \$1100.00 for women's home missions. Under the new plan the women raised and paid in their money as agreed during the year. Then towards the close of the period they asked the church treasurer why no money had been sent

to their national organizations. They found that he had paid in full most of the other items in the beneficence budget of the church and had nothing on hand for them. No persuasion on their part could induce any of the official members of the church to right the wrong done the women's mission circles. By heroic sacrificial giving the women made up a large part of their usual amounts but the whole had wronged and injured the part most seriously. An exceptional case! The general officers of the women's mission societies would tell you that many such cases have come to their notice. No self-respecting, honest church would allow such a thing to happen. We must forever end the possibility of it by officially securing a rule to have all the beneficence or mission money handled by a treasurer of mission funds who is definitely instructed to remit all funds on hand, the last day of each month, to all organizations having a place in the budget in proportion as one item is related to the others. Here is a sample of what is meant:

Let us say that the mission budget of the church includes:

TABLE 1

Foreign missions.....	\$600.00	37½%
Home missions.....	350.00	27⅞%
Woman's foreign missions.....	300.00	18¾%
Woman's home missions.....	200.00	12½%
Christian education.....	50.00	3⅛%
State missions.....	100.00	6¼%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$1600.00	100%

Using this imaginary budget as an illustration, if \$155.10 had come in at the end of the first month every dollar would be disbursed in accordance with the above percentages. This would be the result:

TABLE 2

Foreign missions.....	37½%	\$58.16
Home missions.....	27⅞%	33.92
Woman's foreign missions.....	18¾%	29.08
Woman's home missions.....	12½%	19.39
Christian education.....	3⅛%	4.86
State missions.....	6¼%	9.69
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100%	\$155.10

All funds should be disbursed at least once a quarter. To retain money for a longer period is to sadly cripple the national organizations by interest charges.

The rule providing for such a disbursement should be *absolute and irrevocable after the year's budget has been made up* as in the first table and passed upon officially. In first making up such a budget as found in Table 1, it will often be discovered that on the basis of last year's payments the items for the women's societies are larger in proportion than those of the general societies. The women should not be penalized for past zeal and efficiency. Instead of scaling down the women's items the other items should be scaled up. The women largely outnumber the men in the membership of the church and when they are given a voice in the management of the local church their votes should be registered in favor of such a rule to bind the mission treasurer and then to secure such a unified mission budget. A little sex consciousness to secure a good result in this direction should be aroused. As a department of the church the women should have official recognition and place upon any representative unifying board.

In presenting this unified plan for securing the payment of God's money by His stewards, the objection is often raised that it will cause a serious let-down in the zeal and objectives of the mission circle because it takes away the one great pressing objective of the present plan

which puts the responsibilities of raising funds upon the circle. Many say that such a change of procedure will put the mission circle out of existence. Not so. That very statement is a decided indication that evil is present in the absorption to a large degree by money-raising efforts. Greater and more vital tasks must take the place of past activity along money-raising lines. The mission circle will share adequately the task of raising the total budgets of the whole church. They will do cultivation work constantly so as to help produce stewardship in every life in the church.

An offering should be taken at every meeting of the mission circle as a part of the worship life of those children of God. The mission circle will, of course, be retained in the life of the church and will appoint a treasurer to handle any funds that may be paid in at the meetings of the circle or at other times. Such monies would then be passed on to the church treasurer and beneficence treasurer.

Avenues for practical missionary work must be developed by the women. Unless the women's missionary organizations begin at once to grapple with the problem of reaching the unchurched and needy who are in their own community there is little hope of reaching the aliens in our midst or of seeing the unsaved

led to Christ. These two tasks can never be adequately attempted through paid workers alone, valuable as such work undoubtedly is. Much of the work must be done by the rank and file of our church membership. The women and their organizations must do their full share of this great task by hand to hand and heart to heart contact with the women and children who need Christ. To give money and withhold self will not suffice. It is mocking God. The spirit to reach those needy ones must be first aroused through intercession for them with God. When we have really interceded with God on their behalf our souls will be dynamited into going after them personally. "But," some one says, "many of them are living in dirty quarters where smells are unpleasant and unclean habits are rife and we do not like to go to such places and deal with people in such conditions." That may all be true, but that is not the fundamental reason for the failure to reach them. On the best avenue in the place where church members and women workers reside are many unsaved people. Yet we do no more for them in Christ's name though we mix with them constantly than is done for the foreign-speaking people about us. At the root of the whole matter lies a non-missionary heart and life. In a large Eastern

city after Sunday morning service some time ago, a certain woman approached the pastor. After curtly greeting him she said: "I want my church letter as soon as possible, if you please." Astonished, the minister asked for the cause of her determination to leave the church where for many years she had been a member. "Well," she answered, "if you must know, then it is because you are democratizing this congregation and for the past three Sunday mornings I have had to sit next an ill-smelling foreigner. I want to worship God in more exclusive surroundings." Is such a spirit either missionary or Christian? A little study and a little money with here a pink tea given to bring Africa to Christ and there a supper feeding the overfed that China starving for Christ may somehow get Him, and so on through all the activities that are devoid of any personal contact with women and children who are lost without Christ. What a farce it must be in the sight of God wherever such is the true picture.

After sober reflection and with clear vision it is certain that much of what has been going on has been because of lack of real understanding rather than a wilful disregard of the Father's desires and expressed will.

The transition from old and unwise methods

to new and proper ones must begin with the little inner circle of women who love God supremely. Beginning with them it will spread out like a fire in ever wider reaches till women everywhere are doing personal work with the unsaved and are giving loving Christ-like personal service to reach the foreign-speaking people in our midst. Then with the giving of life at home will go money and more and more money to evangelize the outer circles of the great world in which we live.

Propagation, education and the money relation are all essential parts of the one great love that must find expression through the life of every professing Christian. The life must live the profession and not give it the lie. The life always speaks more potently than the lips.

In concluding this chapter let me tell you a story that was told to me by a little woman. As she narrated her experience it was with a face that glowed. "Out where I was living," she said, "we decided that every member of our mission and aid societies should undertake to find and do some piece of work that would really count for Christ. Then we were to report progress once a month and cooperate where developments made it wise. I am naturally diffident and so it seemed hard for me to find anything suited to my ability.

Early one afternoon I went down to the grocery store and was waiting at the counter while the clerk tied up a package for me. Just then the delivery man came in and the proprietor called out to him, 'Well, Jim, what kind of a morning did you have on your round?' In response the young fellow said, 'Why, all right, but you pretty nearly lost me for the rest of the day.' 'Why?' was the reply. 'You know it was the morning I go to the Russian settlement for orders,' said Jim, 'and when I reached the shack where Mrs. ——— hangs out I found her sick and in bed. You never saw such a place in your life,' he went on to say, 'that woman had been laid up for three days, the place was filthy and the three children were indescribable.' 'Where was her husband?' queried the proprietor. 'He was holding down his job on the beet fields.' Then by way of explanation to me the little woman added, "You see those Russians take a contract to weed and cultivate a certain number of acres of beet sugar land with the expectation that the wife and even the small tots will help. If their piece of acreage is not kept weeded according to requirements their contract is forfeited. So the man, deprived of the help of his wife and children, had been working from five in the morning till he could no longer see to work.

Then he had stumbled back into the shack and fallen asleep in utter weariness. To lose his contract was to lose all chance to make a living." Then taking up Jim's narrative again she said he added, "I felt like taking off my coat and pitching in to clean up those poor people and their place for there is no one else to do it, all the other women and children are hard at work out in the fields from early morning till late at night."

"Standing there at the counter I had waited to hear the end of the conversation," said the little woman, "and then it did seem to me that this was something I could do. So I asked Jim for the name and address of the Russian woman. Getting on an old dress and taking some things with me I went down there at once. The sick woman could not speak a word of my language and, of course, I knew nothing of hers, but what she needed most was a language of deeds. Soon she had been made comfortable, then it was the children's turn, so they were fed and cleaned up. Then I did the best that was possible to clean up the poor one-room shack. About five o'clock my work was done and I was ready to go home when I remembered the man. Without doubt he had been without hot food of any sort for several days. So I went to the nearest meat market,

got a piece of meat and put it to simmer so that the husband might have some warm food when he came back late that night. For six days I went down there," she continued, "then the Russian woman was able to be up and about. Some days later I was going out for a drive in my phaeton when it struck me that it would do my friend good if I took her out for a ride in the sunshine. So I went for her and we drove around town and on the way back when passing my house it occurred to me that perhaps my companion would like to see an American Christian home. Stopping the horse I got out and beckoning her to follow me, we went in through the back door. After looking around for a short while with an exclamation she pointed to the porcelain sink which my maid had cleaned till it shone like a looking-glass. We went from one thing to another, then from one room to the next till all the house had been inspected. How it did interest me to watch her wonderment when in response to an exclamation or a pointed finger I would show her the use made of various articles. But at last we had been all around and I was leading the way along the upper hall to go down the stairs. Suddenly the woman with a torrent of Russian words pouring from her lips touched my shoulder. Turning, I saw she

was pointing to a little picture of the thorn-crowned head of the Christ, by Guido Reni, which hung at the head of the front stairs. Then by a sign she asked me if I knew Him. I nodded my head and smiled. She nodded and smiled in return for she had seen such a picture in her own far-away land. Then pointing down she knelt under the picture. At once I was beside her and in the silence of the long hall the two of us prayed to God. No," she added reflectively, "*the three of us* because I am sure Christ Himself was there as well as the picture of Him by the great artist. Then I drove her back home. And God had spoken to my heart in a wonderful way.

"The next day was the maid's afternoon out. As it was a very stormy day and being alone in the house I went up to take a nap. Before long I was awakened by a loud and insistent knocking on the back door. When I went down to see who was there and came within range of the kitchen window to my dismay I saw a long string of—yes, they were Russian women, a dozen of them, with my friend at the head of the line. My first impulse was not to let them in, and I started to tiptoe away, but then I did what was right in the end—only I made them all clean their muddy feet on the cocoanut mat. With signs my Russian

friend made known that the other women had been told about the house and wanted very much indeed to see it." With a little laugh the woman said to me, "You know it was most interesting to watch them as they went around under the guidance of the one who had been there the day before, for I stood aside and let her do the honors of the occasion quite largely.

"By and by the whole house had been seen and down the long upper hall we were heading for the stairway. Then when I was under the picture of the thorn-crowned head of Christ some words were spoken, a sudden stillness fell on all, to be broken, however, in a moment more by the movement of people and then in a new hush you could have seen thirteen kneeling figures. Yes, the picture was there hanging on the wall, but again I am sure that Christ Himself was with us all just then as we prayed to the Father in heaven.

"When I left that town some years later," she added, "you could find a neat little chapel on the outskirts of those beet sugar fields. You might not be able to read the sign on the chapel for it was in a strange language but someone would tell you that it says, 'A Russian chapel for women and children, conducted by the Women's society in ———.' Over thirty Russian women have united with the

church and every available afternoon and evening finds many Russian women and children flocking there."

That was the end of the story told me by the little woman in that Maine town. But in heaven above the story does not end there. It has no end even in the long reaches of eternity. Nor is the story the end of the experience on earth for the glowing face of the little woman tells another story of a soul that has found refreshment and continued rejoicing through an expressional activity in the name of the Christ.

Why should not every mission circle have some such story to tell of a similar piece of work done in the name of the Saviour Jesus Christ?

By way of contrast let me tell you another story.

The City Superintendent of Missions in one of the largest centers in America said this recently: "I have fifty or more mission fields under my direction. In my denomination there is no way by which I can get any help from a local church to meet the needs of one of those mission fields unless people volunteer to serve. The Women's Mission Circles are so busy raising money they report they cannot help in the mission work. For instance, in the

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Stock Yards district we have a mission. We do our best to support it with money and paid workers, but we can only help provide for its real needs. Hundreds of children are near by, they must play in dirty streets, come into a smut-covered gloomy room, listen to a wheezy organ played by someone who is doing her best, but that provides only poor music of an unattractive sort. Not far away in an attractive church several dozen women are meeting in the interests of foreign or home missions with tea and cake on the side at ten cents per person to raise money for the missionary cause. Having eaten their fill, planned a new assault on someone else's pocketbook and listened languidly under perfectly comfortable surroundings to a paper and a speech or two, they then go home while the unattractive way for the city mission fails of its God intended purpose because checkmated by surroundings that could easily be changed by the personal work of that group of church women.

Yet the women say they must raise money to maintain interest in the Foreign and Home Mission cause. They kill interest in Foreign Missions and every other mission cause by their abortive attempts to get money rather than *give it and themselves* in personal service for Christ.

Money will largely raise itself when life and love are present.

Our great task lies before us till the whole world has become the field in which we actively sow the seed of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Plans and methods in detail will be found in the concluding chapter of this book. If the average woman in the rank and file of our women's organizations will put her personality and prayer behind proper plans and methods, the world will soon feel a new power. It will be the power of Christ in an awakened and working church.

III

THE AID SOCIETY OR WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

IN the life of the local church of Jesus Christ, the Aid Society or Women's Auxiliary should properly be an aid to the spiritual life and ministry of that organization. There are many such Aid Societies serving all mankind in every phase of human need in the name of Christ Jesus. Very often in the past many others have failed to be what has been stated as the purpose of a true Aid Society.

The reason for this failure is not hard to find. Let us examine it here and now. In the average church half or less of the membership have been paying to support the local work of the organization. Such a failure on the part of the other half to pay anything for the maintenance of the church has meant deplorable financial conditions and many unmet needs. The men in official positions in the church life have often been deplorably inefficient and lax. Instead of using their stewardship of time and

energy to right the conditions that were wrong, and often instead of paying their own due share of unprovided resources they have saddled upon the women an expectation that they would provide the necessary money. The good women greatly loving their church, often unable to pay more out of their own resources and without any thorough examination of results in the long run, went to work and earned the money by the very many expedients and devices that have come to be associated with the Aid department of the local church.

Some women have a genius for such activities and went into the work without any regard for consequences, but it is safe to say that most Christian women have only engaged in these endeavors because they saw no other way to provide the needed resources for the local church.

Perhaps today we have many an overlapping, unneeded church in dozens of communities because of the money earning capacity of a small group with more zeal than vision. On the other hand it is safe to say that where God needed a church He would have raised up those who through hardship and difficulty would have wrought out His will through heroic stewardship.

The greatest evil that has resulted from the money-making device in the local church has

been the loss of spiritual power caused by non-functioning professing Christians who did not and would not give directly to God as an act of worship. They knew that the existence of the church would be maintained by secondary methods of producing money. Furthermore, perhaps more or less unconsciously, the local church has become enveloped by a commercial and competitive spirit instead of a devotional atmosphere. The intense activity connected with fairs, suppers and pay socials has led to jealousies between members, to social rivalries, to worn out bodies and tired nerves, then something is said and a church is launched on a sea of discord. Such conditions are more prevalent than is generally known when the whole United States is considered.

Interdenominational strife and competition in local circles have also resulted. The world outside has been led to see the church as a money-grabbing agency rather than a Christ-like institution giving loving service in the name of their Master.

Every church should have its social life and activities. Our ministry is to the whole life. The Aid Society is the natural channel for such opportunities but they must be divested of all money seeking or profit taint. To exploit the needs of people for profit is of the world

worldly but to supply those needs by loving service at the expense of the whole church is in accord with the true spirit of a divine organization. The local church should include in its budget an item to make possible the above plan by appropriating for the work of the Aid Society a sum of money from the church treasury that will be sufficient to meet all the legitimate needs of the case. "That seems too good to be true," one woman recently said, then she added, "that will be heaven when such a plan is carried out." "Yes," was the response, "it will be a little more of heaven on earth today. That is what the Christian people are here for."

Some time ago when visiting a church where the above plan is in effect I attended a mid-year dinner given by the Aid Society on behalf of the church. Every member of the church and congregation was invited. Everything used was bought and paid for. The helpers in the kitchen were hired. Only those who waited on the tables were ministering in the name of the Master, just as Mary and Martha waited on Him in that other household so long ago. Standing at the door to greet the people as they came in was the pastor and a group of members. Soon I saw a woman with three children enter. She was properly greeted and

the children were carried off by one of the young people to a special room where plans for their dinner and entertainment had been made. As the woman passed on to mingle with others I was told that she was rich in spiritual life but very, very poor in this world's goods. After the dinner was over and those with children were going early the woman came up to the pastor to say good night, then she added, "My but it was fine to be here, that is the best dinner me and the chicks have had in many a long day." At the dinner table she was seated next a rich man, but the true spirit of brotherhood and fellowship obtained in that church. The pastor added, "If there had been a charge of ten cents she could not have come, but under our plan every member is welcome. She gives five cents a week to missions and ten to church expense, so with great self-respect she could enjoy every ministry the church afforded."

The brotherly spirit, even the fervor in the singing of the hymns about the table as well as the pastoral prayer, marked the occasion as one of great spiritual value to that whole household.

Some time ago I attended an Aid Society meeting which I wish to describe to you in some detail.

The meeting, with over forty present, began with a hymn and a short prayer. Then there followed events that would delight the soul of Dorcas herself. It appears there had been a rummage amongst the congregation the previous week. No, I did not say a rummage sale. The church of which I am telling you had not gone into the second-hand store business, nor were they commercializing. (There are some good reasons for selling clothes to poor but self-respecting people, provided the profits are used for other relief work amongst the needy, but to exploit the needs of poor people in order to support a church is neither self-respecting nor Christ-like. The membership ought to support the workshop of God out of their payments to God.) Their rummage had produced a lot of garments which they began to inspect and then after some consultation to rip up. A little later a ten-year-old lad sidled into the room. He was embarrassed and very ragged. But one of the women called to him by name and in a moment or two he was being sized up for some garments which he needed very badly. He had been attending the Bible School but had been absent for several weeks. The Aid Society cooperated with the Bible School and whenever the teacher could not follow up absentees then it was done by the women. In

the case of the lad it had at once been discovered that he had remained away because his widowed mother could not provide him with respectable clothing, she had six children and was not strong. It was also developed that the boy had played truant from the day school for the same reason, had been arrested but the truant officer had paroled him to the Aid Society. Now they were using the rummage to fit out the lad with suitable clothing. At the close of the afternoon when he returned three well-fitting pairs of pants and as many shirts were handed over to him. I overheard the woman who gave him the package say: "Will, there is a little present for your mother in the package. You give it to her with the love of the Aid Society. Don't forget to give her my message, will you?" Charity! No, not in the sense that some use that word. Is it charity for me to make my wife a present, to give her a token of my love? Were not those people sisters in one household of faith?

In the membership of the church were several young women who worked day by day under conditions that kept them long hours on their feet and the pay was small, so small that it was hard to make ends meet. They could not afford to hire the mending done, they were too weary to do it on a week night so had been

staying home from church on Sunday to do such things. Out of love that Aid Society did all the mending for those young women, and again they were found in the worship life of the church. What a helpful ministry that simple service performed.

Several of the good women were at work on some new linen for the communion table. The first hour of that meeting was over when the pastor came in with a smile and a word of greeting. Then sewing was put aside and all work ceased as he began to read them some wonderful words from the Book of Life. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:40-43). When the words from the great Life had died away, led by the pastor those women repeated in concert the prayer given them by Jesus. A list of names of shut-ins and sick people was then read over and a report given on each one by some woman

who had agreed to care especially for that person. Plans were then discussed with the minister concerning a special service soon to be given for the shut-ins. Little cards were next produced on which were written three or more names. It developed that each woman had a prayer list and once a month they all brought them to the meeting for prayer and discussion. Some hopeful cases were mentioned, other difficult ones were made the subject of joint prayer there and then. Two reported on some personal work done with names on their list. Yes, that group of women were really in great and eternal business for the Lord of all creation.

The women then stood for the benediction and went out with a worshipful feeling to give the remaining time of the afternoon to special visitation. "There was variety in the lines of service and in the needs to be met," they told me in response to my query. Best of all, the pastor testified that the whole spiritual tone of the church had been lifted since the women had adopted the plan of giving service in the name of Christ to meet any need that developed.

Perhaps the meeting of that Aid Society might suggest some lines of service to other groups that now work altogether from a different point of view.

From Aid Society meetings in other churches came some splendid ideas. The group of women had been discussing some weeks before what each one could find to do in the interests of the Aid Society and the church. These were some of the testimonies that came later on as a result of the discussion:

"I had a girl of sixteen. She was getting to the difficult place where selfishness was very apparent. It was said that the best way to get help was to be helpful. So I suggested to Mary that we ask about eight of the girls of her own age from foreign-speaking homes in our neighborhood to come to our house on Friday after school. Then she was to teach them how to do a much admired piece of fancy work. I was to help them whenever necessary and have some lemonade and cookies on hand for the gathering. Since we began to do that my own daughter has been different because she has come to realize that she had many things to be thankful for. Months afterwards those eight girls were regular attendants in the Bible School of that church."

An Aid Society made it part of their work to suggest to those having homes the names of certain church attendants who were away from home, and then an invitation to Sunday dinner would follow. A very interesting case de-

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veloped as a result of that ministry. From a home of plenty years before the angel of death had carried away the only child. For years her place at the table was faced only by an empty chair. One Sunday in response to the suggestion of the Aid Society that mother had taken home to dinner a strange young woman who had recently come to work in that city, and had been attending church services. The stranger occupied the daughter's old place at the family table, she was young and homesick, but brave and true. As the mother talked with her and watched her many things crossed her mind. They resulted in an invitation for the next Sunday. Now every Lord's day the vacant place at the table is filled by the homeless young girl. She has been led to Christ, is a church member and teaches a class in the Bible School. The selfish grief of the home has been changed also. One of the unused assets of the church is the Christian home. It must be used to advance the cause of Christ.

Another Aid Society developed a very useful and beautiful form of ministry. Systematically the boys and girls were sent out in pairs to call upon the shut-ins or old people. The call was to be a short one. Generally a flower was taken. But it blessed the lives of many an old man and woman to have the

bright faces of the children come to them especially. Who can tell what it did for the children to implant in their lives the habit of unselfish service.

It has been said that there is no heart but what has its aches. Gipsy Smith used to say that many times he has been told that what every heart needs is just a bit of love and comfort. How many lonely people there are in this great big world. The world is not getting all the love and comfort from God's people that they have to give. Perhaps many a heart has lost its own comfort and love because He was locked up within and was not given a chance to grow by use. In a neighborly way our good women have been doing individually many of the things mentioned here. But the church relation should be more potent than that of neighbor and we need to go on doing all the good and kind deeds we can but the name and spirit of Jesus should take the place of neighbor spirit and name. A good ministry is worthy of His name if we love Him. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these in my name ye have done it unto me," was what Jesus said. Other plans and methods will be found in the final chapter.

The one object of this discussion of the Aid Society is to try to show the need of a simple

but loving personal ministry done in God's name by those who have time and opportunity to do it. We are all stewards of time and energy and God must have the first fruits of all our increase of those two vital personal elements. We have all lacked expression for our Christian impressions. We must express if we are to save the impress of His love upon our souls. It is a simple ministry, so simple that we have neglected it. Yet it belongs to all who speak His name. The Aid Society can aid the Kingdom and the church by putting its organization behind a loving effort to meet this need of a world that greatly needs love and comfort. The world is a lonely place without Christ and His ministry.

IV

METHODS AND MACHINERY

MACHINERY, be it ever so good, without the love of Christ in the hearts of those who are to use it will not bring the needed results in the local church. We must never forget, "By this ye may know that ye have passed from death unto life because ye love the brethren." Love is the oil that will keep the machine in good working order.

Methods are very necessary. There are tried and proven methods on every hand, but there must be the individual members to put the methods into practice.

The most potent and initial means at hand is to increase the prayer spirit in the lives of the women. Without prayer our progress will be slow indeed, but when prayer has been made and the prayer spirit has been aroused then there is tremendous outreach and upreach in the lives that are concerned. Prayer should be definite and concrete. Mission circles and Aid Societies should organize their workers for

prayer. Prayer has three main channels of expression, petition, communion and intercession. The "inner circle" group of a certain Woman's Society gathered themselves together for intercession. A list of women who did not participate in the life of the church was made out and pairing themselves that inner circle of women divided up the names. They began then to intercede with God for those on their list. A real spirit of intercession leads to action and soon those women were visiting and praying with the non-participating members. Once a month a meeting was held to exchange experiences and enroll new comers. Things soon happened that glorified God not only in the women's circles but throughout the whole church.

Often a list of unsaved people is made up and then divided amongst the members of the mission or Aid Society. Here is a sample of such a list, the card is an inch and three-quarters wide by three and a half inches long:

PRAYER LIST

I engage with the help of God to pray
each day for

.....
.....
.....

Signed

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After interceding with God for the unsaved people till a real burden rests upon the soul of the intercessor then personal work can be done with every promise of success. It has been well said that you cannot do much till you have prayed, but after each prayer much can be brought to pass. Prayer, whether it is petition, communion, or intercession has two phases, the communication from or with God, then the resulting action in your own life. Just these two definite methods of prayer and personal work are enough to transform the whole aspect and outreach of any Aid or Mission Circle. They result in spiritual life and the only way to secure money for Christ's great Kingdom enterprise is through a life that gives lovingly because it lives in God. The only concern that an Aid or Mission Circle should have with the production of money is to help every woman to share in the obligation that rests upon every member and child of God to pay into God's treasury as a minimum one-tenth of all their increase. That covers the bare necessities of the case. Further than that the women should cultivate those able to give more than the tenth. We should never dam up the stream of sacrificial giving for specific causes and it is both wise and proper after a woman has done her fair share in connection

with the whole task of the church to secure from her specific gifts for women's work amongst women and children.

Constantly there should be given plain teaching about stewardship and sacrificial giving. Finally at every meeting, as an act of worship, there should be taken an offering, but with no begging accompaniments.

The educational work of the Mission Circle is of very great importance. Study groups can be formed to meet in the church parlors at afternoon hours. This is an organized formal group of women who pursue a course of study in a definite book. Small informal groups should be organized to meet at any available hour in a house. These small groups can be led by women who are in the large and more formal study class. The small company use a lesson the week behind the other group. Some time ago I found fourteen such small groups in one church. Some of them comprised three women, others had a dozen. They met morning, afternoon or evening as suited the individual group. In another church I recently found that twenty mission circle women had enlisted their husbands and together were studying the current text book. There was to be a debate growing out of the study between

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the men and women when the book was completed.

A woman had been blessed of God with a fine house and much money. An ex-teacher interested her in mission study. She finally offered to cooperate with her friend in the following way: "You have ability to teach. I have a house and some money to use. Invite a group of working girls to come here for six successive Thursday nights. Have them come direct from work, they will be my guests for supper, then sitting around the table you can take them through a mission study book." Thus it was done. One dozen was followed by another. Then some of those girls were asked if they would lead a small group in a similar study. Other homes were opened, until at the end of the season it was found that more than a hundred had gone through the missionary text book of that year. Those young women then secured a dramatization of the book and presented it to several groups within and without their own church.

The dramatized form of missionary presentation is suited to the rural and village church as well as for the big city organization. In fact in the country, with modern roads and automobiles there is a better chance to get the participants together in the evening for re-

hearsals after the lines have been learned by the players. In one case a group of young people connected as an auxiliary with the Woman's Home Mission Circle gave such a drama in seven surrounding school houses. Those young people can never be the same after such an experience.

To the Women's Mission Circles must be committed the task of providing supplementary mission studies for the boys and girls in the Bible School. The children should be led to study the great missionary heroes. It need not be a formal affair, but with ingenuity and love the facts can be drilled into the young boys and girls at the crucial time of their lives. Many a time I have tried such a plan and always I am led to feel that it has great merit. Whatever is done with the boys and girls along these lines should be absolutely divorced from money getting. We have been doing such work here and there with the real objective as money. It is a form of graft and in the end will destroy the very thing you seek. Money is an effect, not a cause. Stewardship with its consequent giving of time, talent and money to God should be taught and enforced in connection with the church membership and the personal relation of the soul to God.

Sometimes I am told that if the unified

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budget is put in and the duty of raising money is taken away from the women they will have been robbed of their real usefulness. To project missionary passion into the life of one boy or girl is a bigger accomplishment than the raising of money as it has been done in the past by the average circle. The household of faith, the body of Christ, the local church must solemnly and carefully see that the giving function is developed in the life of every child of God. This responsibility must rest there and not in a segment of the church. In the average church there are from six to ten money-raising agencies. It is nothing less than suicide to continue such practices.

The Aid or Mission Circle should project a course of Bible study amongst its membership. The Bible is the great missionary book. It is worth studying from that or any other viewpoint. Many who will not join the Home department of the Bible School can be induced to join a little group for four or six weeks. Once a week they read and discuss, under competent direction, one or two chapters till an Epistle has been completed. In this way a taste for such things can be cultivated. "Oh," says someone, "those plans are too much like work." Yes, they do mean hard work and much prayer on the part of the inner circle,

because you cannot interest others till you have interested yourself. If God be God and Christ is the Saviour no one should be fearful of some real hard labor in His behalf. He is the most important consideration in the life and of all the life.

A certain mission circle has a reading committee with a literature secretary. The secretary gets hold of everything available, reads it and then sends for what is advisable. The reading committee then distributes it in some personal way, even using ingenuity to attract notice to and interest in it.

Another small committee is charged with the duty of clipping and filing away for future use good material. Some simple filing system must be used in order that you may be able to find what is on hand when it is needed. Such a clipping committee often furnishes the pastor with some good illustrative matter if missions is not getting ample presentation from the pulpit. The pastor always accepts the hint.

In another case, twice a year the Mission Circle has a debate with the Men's Brotherhood or the Young People's Society. Here are several topics they have used:

1. “Resolved, That footbinding in China is

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not more heathenish than some practices in our own country.

2. "Resolved, That medical missions present a greater opportunity than any other phase of missionary enterprise."

There is keen interest both on the part of those participating in and those who listen to the debate and a large attendance can always be counted upon.

Little groups of women are going out together to call upon foreign-speaking peoples in their homes. Then later on they gather half a dozen of the women together in the home of one of the foreign-speaking women and for several weeks teach them some fancy work stitch. One set of women undertook to teach them how to cook certain typical American dishes. This is followed up by other activities planned to gradually interest the women in Christ as a Saviour. Recently I heard of a woman who gave a series of afternoon teas with the announced purpose of having the guests consider with her the acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour. Her invitations were generally accepted and a number of people started to live a Christian life as a result of the effort.

The older girls in such homes present many an opportunity for Christian activity. We

must interest the women and children before we can hope to reach the men or the group. Ingenuity and persistence embedded in love will conquer the difficulties in the path of such work. Of course there are difficulties. They are always to be found in connection with any worth-while task.

The Mission Circle should see that their church has a missionary committee to unify and project all the missionary plans and purposes of the whole church. Such a committee can be called by any name suitable to the plans of the particular communion with which the local church is connected. Ordinarily such a committee is formed by one member or officer from each and every department in the church doing any phase of Gospel propagation or missionary enterprise. The church itself is represented by two of the lay officers such as deacons, stewards, or elders and two lay members at large. The pastor is ex-officio a member but not the chairman. All plans of work, methods and objectives are considered by this committee and then each department of the church is assigned their share of the whole task. There is therefore a unified plan along missionary education lines and the whole church is enlisted to attain to a certain standard.

Being entertained some time ago in a certain

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home there came to me besides generous hospitality a very useful piece of information. At the supper table a son of fourteen years asked his mother a question about a missionary hero. Before she had time to answer the father began to do so. Then the whole family of boy, girl, father and mother discussed that missionary topic. Enquiry developed the fact that their church had a missionary committee and a unified educational plan that caused men, women, boys and girls all to study the same topic from different books suited to the age and condition of the students. With such a plan there is no overlapping or duplication of effort. This committee makes up the mission part of the double church budget and then presents it to the governing body for consideration. When the every-member canvass is being prepared for they see to it that complete information concerning all phases of work included in the budget gets thorough circulation. The Mission Circle and Aid Society are both represented upon such a committee.

Many Mission Circles now put up in the church vestibule bulletin boards containing graphic facts of missionary import. I saw such a board on which a young woman had drawn a picture of a cute little Chinese boy and girl and underneath had written, "We

want to know about Jesus. Will you tell us about Him?”

Church calendars are widely used and generally read. The Mission Circle can get good material for a bi-weekly presentation through such a channel. In one church the first calendar in each month was given up to a missionary presentation.

A group of women cut from a magazine a most interesting mission story, then pasted it upon a good piece of stationery, leaving a wide margin on the right side of the sheet of paper. Two or three of the influential women read it and underneath a heading, “I Have Read This,” signed their names. It was then energetically circulated and before it was returned over forty supposedly uninterested women had read the little story. Such stories must be carefully chosen but many suitable ones can be found.

In connection with all such work the money appeal must absolutely be divorced. The opportunity to pay or to give to God should be present in every service of worship. When will we learn that to get money for God’s purposes we must first create love and life. If we really get the life to love God then money obligations will be met if proper instruction and opportunity is given. Instruction in stew-

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ardship must constantly be given and once a year a thorough every-member canvass should be carried out in connection with the double budget of the church. The whole church gives itself up to spiritual preparation for this most important task. Here I give a copy of a double budget. The first few items should be included in the plans of the smallest rural or village church as well as in the largest city church. Other items may be added to meet local needs.

DOUBLE BUDGET

For all of God's Kingdom Enterprises

Local Church Expenses

Salary
Light
Heat
Music
Bible School
Young People
Aid Society
Repair
Miscellaneous

Missions and Beneficence

Foreign Missions
Woman's Foreign Missions
Home Missions
Woman's Home Missions
State Missions
Christian Education
Reserve Fund

(These items will of course be changed to suit the plans and procedures of various communions.)

In making the canvass the objective should be to secure from every member the maximum amount they have to pay into the Lord's

treasury for all phases of work at home and abroad. Each member will then be asked to give in this one direct way through a weekly double envelope all that they gave and more than heretofore given to church, to Aid Society and to Sunday School on the current expense side and to church budget for home and foreign missions and to women's home and foreign missions on the beneficence side of the double budget. Thus like one pair of lungs in the physical body perform their function in such cooperation and coordination, so the giving function will be performed in the spiritual life. The result will be that in facing their obligation in one direct act of worship larger more normal giving will be realized than when individuals were paying in five or six different directions at many different times.

The church should have two treasurers, one for current expense fund and another for missions and beneficences. The Aid and Mission Circle should also have a cashier or treasurer as an offering should be taken up at every service held, but no begging done in connection with it. The Aid or Mission Circle treasurer would turn over each week the money that came into her hands. This cashier or treasurer of a department would note the receipts in her book of all money or envelopes received by her

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and would carefully turn over a record with the cash.

In the case of the Aid Society that receives from the whole church a budget to spend in connection with their work, such budget is drawn from the church treasurer in quarterly amounts and is spent by the dapartment in accordance with the needs of that phase of church life and work. At the end of the year accounts and vouchers are returned to the church treasurer for submission to the church auditors. Any one handling the funds of others should keep accurate accounts and those accounts should be audited by competent people. This is both a Christian and a business-like way to avoid difficulties. It is no reflection on the honesty of any one. It is a common practice in all walks of life in connection with the handling of other people's money.

A plan for the unification of all the women's activities in a local church has been tried in a number of places with marked success. A Woman's Union is formed. Every woman member of the church is considered a member by virtue of her relation to the church. A president of the Union is duly elected. Six or more departments are then organized each under the leadership of a vice-president. That vice-president is the virtual president of that de-

partment. Usually an Aid, Mission, Mothers', Cooking, Social and Young Women's departments are constituted. In this connection let me point out one place where the church has not been wise. Here is a woman with a literary trend and she has powers of leadership. She has gone outside the church to find all her opportunity. Why should she not find a similar chance to serve inside the church circle? Why not add a literary department to the Woman's Union? I knew one such woman who for twenty-four years, seven months each year on each Monday night has conducted a Shakespearian circle. Hundreds have belonged to that group in the course of those years. Many of them were non-professors when they joined, but many of them found Christ soon after.

In large churches a number of other departments are often added. The aim is to get under the auspices of the church such needed activities as will enlist the interest and co-operation of the largest possible number of the women in the church life. The various departments meet at such times as suits the convenience of their membership. A woman often belongs to two or more of the departments. Each conducts its own business under the leadership of its own vice-president. All the

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vice-presidents with the president form an executive committee. Once a month all departments hold a joint session when reports from all interests are received, joint work is decided upon, a devotional session is held and twenty minutes given for a live missionary presentation, followed by light refreshments which are paid for by the organization and for which no charge is made. If this seems too formidable an organization the departments can be handled by various committees.

Such an organization gives solidarity and point to the women's activities in any church and it largely increases the number who are touched by the missionary message. Present Aid Societies or Mission Circles are left intact and just incorporated as a department in the Union. An up-to-date church includes in its budget of current expense an item to cover the money needs of such a Union, for such an organization has no money-raising function in a well-managed church.

Some churches that have developed the every-member canvass quite thoroughly have every child in the Sunday School canvassed in the presence of a parent. The children in the family of a church member are visited on the Sunday afternoon of the church canvass. All other children not church members or from the

home of church members are canvassed by teams of women from the Aid Society on the Monday and Tuesday afternoon following the general church canvass. Every child is urged to make a pledge for church support and missions and every subscriber is given a regular bunch of double pocket envelopes for the current year. The influence of such a procedure upon the future life of the child as well as upon the resources of the church is great.

Many Aid Societies are systematically planning and carrying out a regular visitation to shut-ins. The Gospel of Christ is a Gospel of good cheer and love. If you give, you get. Aid Societies divide their membership into pairs and each pair of women takes ten or a dozen houses that are connected with the church and keeps in touch with those living therein. If there is sickness, trouble, lack of attendance upon public worship or a failure to give then a loving ministry follows in an attempt to help the situation. Reports of needy cases are constantly and promptly made to the pastor and lay spiritual officers.

Mission Circles seek to increase the circulation of missionary books and periodicals. Once a year they concentrate upon this object and secure subscriptions for missionary literature or orders for the latest missionary books.

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Each of these methods and the use of all the machinery will involve genuine effort and real work. Time must be given for such efforts even if some other things are allowed to slip out of the busy life. Each child of God is a steward. All we have and all we are is given to us by God to use for Him and His glory. He requires the first fruits of our time, energy, talents and money. We cannot give Him money instead of time. Nor will time and energy be acceptable in place of money. If we have both or all of these, then He must get the first share of them all. To do less than this is to let the life deny the truth of the profession of faith in Jesus as Saviour.

To do what He requires and then more is to give love's great demonstration that He has the first place in all our life.

"Help those women," was the injunction of an apostle. The need of the church today is to help the women in the church so that they may help all the rest of the church to attain to the powers and possibilities in Christ in order to help Him win a lost world.

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